

# Accident Takes Out City of Kanopolis' Well House and Equipment

**T**here is a great emphasis on emergency planning. It's difficult to predict what the emergency might be. Consider what happened at Kanopolis, KS this year.

On May 3, 2010 a young woman was driving north towards Highway 40 near Kanopolis. According to the Kansas Highway Patrol, the 41-year-old female was driving a truck north on K-111 Highway when she lost control. The truck entered the west ditch, struck a culvert, and went airborne. It then struck a brick structure, which happened to be the city of Kanopolis' Well House #7, and a power pole. The power pole came to a rest on top of the vehicle.

**The truck entered the west ditch, struck a culvert, and went airborne.**

The city's well house was destroyed, including the internal piping, chlorination system, telemetry controls and the power supply to the well house. The pump survived. The driver was pinned in the pickup as was a child in the back seat. The Kanopolis and Ellsworth fire departments responded to the accident in minutes just as the pickup began to burn. The child was removed first but the driver took twenty minutes to cut out of the truck while the fire was being suppressed and power turned off. The driver sustained knee and ankle injuries requiring surgery and therapy; the child

was treated and released. As of October 1, both accident victims are doing fine. The pickup was totaled. Daniel Stroede, Kanopolis' Superintendent, was one of the volunteer firemen responding to the accident.

Well #7 was the main well the city. The city relied on it to maintain a supply in its 55,000-gallon elevated tank. It produces eighty gallons per minute (gpm). Another well only produces twenty-five gpm. The city normally operated that well around the clock and Well #7 cycled on and off depending on the need to resupply the tank. The city only maintained one pump control or telemetry system which was on Well #7.



**The city of Kanopolis' well house building, internal piping, chlorination system, telemetry controls and the power supply were destroyed by a pickup truck accident in May 2010.**

This arrangement worked very well for the city for its population of approximately 500 people.

After the accident the city retested another well (No. 1) located at the old power plant. This well produced more than 100 gpm but exceeded the maximum contaminant level for carbon tetrachloride. The water was used only for fire trucks and spraying. A sample was taken to Midcontinent Analytical



**The building, fully demolished and ready for removal.**

Photos courtesy of Marsha Carpenter

in Salina. With the contaminant level nearly at the maximum allowed, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) granted permission to blend water from the well with the other operating well until Well #7 could be repaired. The chlorinator from Well #7 was relocated to Well #1 and put into service the next day to maintain the city's water needs.

For the next thirty-five days, the city maintained its water needs with Well #1 and Well #4. City personnel Darin Webb and Daniel Stroede operated Well #1 manually. Some overtime was incurred by the city.

I assisted the city in a new Emergency Response Plan about two years ago; on May 11, 2010, the city council reviewed and re-adopted the plan with no changes. The services and contractors on the plan were contacted to get Well #7 building and telemetry system replaced.

As for the vehicle that struck the building and power system the insurance carried by the driver's



**This new block structure was in place thirty-five days after the accident.**

\$600. The city's out of pocket loss was \$3,000. The actual replacement cost was approximately \$29,000.

By mid-June, the new well house and telemetry system were complete and Well #7 was back to providing the majority of the city's water needs. The new telemetry system is also more precise than the old one and seasonal levels can be set more easily.

I think the one lesson for other systems is to never assume what might cause an emergency and also, to have property covered at replacement costs on insurance policies.

If any city or RWD wishes to visit about developing or updating their emergency plans, give KRWA a call at 785-336-3760 or email me directly at [dougg@krwa.net](mailto:dougg@krwa.net).

*Doug Guenther has worked as Technical Assistant for KRWA for eleven years. Doug worked for the city of Oakley in the Water and Electric Department for eight years. He has also worked several years for*



*an industry supplier. He is a Class II Certified Water Operator.*

**The city is actively working to obtain a policy that in the future covers all replacement costs.**

parents only covered \$25,000 in collision and the city found out it had no insurance to cover this type of damage. The city is actively working to obtain a policy that in the future covers all replacement costs.

City Clerk Yvonne Stopples and Rolling Hills Power Cooperative report that after the \$25,000 was paid, each entity took a percentage of the money so the loss to each Company was proportional. The Power Company loss was approximately

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